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Testimony on Senate Joint Resolution 26

Senate Committee on Ethics Reform and Government

Operations

September 30, 2009

Thank you, Chairman Risser, and members of the committee for holding this hearing on Senate Joint Resolution 26 (SJR 26) today. This constitutional amendment abolishes the office of Secretary of State. Currently, the Secretary of State has four duties as assigned by the constitution:

- (1). To serve as governor (or acting governor) when there is a vacancy in the Office of Lieutenant Governor;
- (2) Keep a record of the official acts of the legislature and executive department of the state;
- (3). Serve as a member of the board of commissioners for sale of public lands; and
- (4) Keep the great seal of Wisconsin.

Under SJR 26, the Secretary of State is replaced by the Attorney General in the line of gubernatorial succession, it eliminates the requirement to keep legislative and executive records, removes the membership on board of commissioners, and allows the great seal to be kept elsewhere.

In looking at other states, the most common function of other Secretary of States is serving as the chief elections official with duties mirroring those of our own Government Accountability Board. Alaska, Hawaii and Utah do not have a Secretary of State.

I have introduced this joint resolution in the past, and in these tough economic conditions, I see no value in making a \$1.6 million investment in an office that keeps the official acts of the legislative and executive branch and keeps the state seal. Surely, there is better use of our taxpayer dollars. Legislative Reference Bureau could be utilized to maintain the official acts, and the placement of the great seal could be determined by law.

I ask that you join with me in taking another step in streamlining state government and supporting SJR 26. Thank you for your time and consideration. I am happy to answer any questions that you might have.